

## Lilly Cleveland: Painter



PHOTO/DAVE MACCAFERRI

Lilly Cleveland's paintings are mostly done in watercolor. The larger piece, to her left, is of the Blue Fish River.

### **When did you first become interested in art?**

I began taking watercolor classes in local art associations when I was home raising my children. Before that, I worked in human resources and university administration. When we moved to Duxbury, during the last major recession, it was necessary for me to find part time work and stay home with my two sons. I am very glad I did. I was able to combine events management with a budding art career and enjoy my sons and their myriad of wonderful activities.

### **What medium do you work in? Why?**

When I was 40, I took watercolor lessons. I loved the medium and began studying with instructors all over the South Shore. Eventually, I went to Mass Art as a continuing education student. When I arrived for my first class, I discovered that there was no watercolor taught there! It is considered a practice medium. So, I studied drawing, oil and acrylics, design, computer graphics and print classes. I would bring my work to class and my professors were very interested in what I was doing in watercolor and color mixing.

### **Do you make a living as an artist?**

I teach, sell paintings and cards and license images. I also do demonstrations for art associations. Art sales are tied to housing booms when people are decorating. The economic recession has had a huge impact on artists as people are saving their discretionary income. If you are hired by an artist (i.e., contractors, lawyers, doctors, dentists, insurance agents and store owners) it would be nice to take a look at what is for sale by your artist client/customer! Money and art have an interesting effect on people. Some will spend major money renovating a kitchen or taking a trip but say they do not have money for art. "Just can't afford it"... When original art is plentiful and prices are low - it's a good time to buy!

In many ways, art is the perfect small business. Creation is the fun and the goal is to show but you can push it along as fast as you want. If life gets busy, you can throttle back. The Internet has had a profoundly positive effect on the art world. I spend time on web updates and e-marketing, which I enjoy.

Most artists cannot begin to afford attractive exhibition space. It is so important to support

organizations that promote the arts. Most people do not realize that each show has a cost: publicity, refreshments, space. In some cases, the artist is expected to provide those things. The art world is not free.

### **What artists inspire you?**

Artists who are outside the box and push the medium interest me. Among the living are Skip Lawrence and Stephen Quiller. Past "greats" are Emile Nolde, Edgar Whitney, Winslow Homer and oils by Claude Monet. I am very interested in different approaches, papers, materials and including them in the process.

### **Describe your creative process.**

A notion of color leads the idea to define my composition. My method involves looking at something in life (outdoor landscape or indoor still life) or working from my own stock photographs. What emerges is a work that involves many layers, many drying times combined with other mediums. I enjoy acrylic paint, crayon and pencil in my work. I like the look of stressed paper and texture. My imagery departs from photorealism toward the more impressionistic or abstract. It may be a glimpse or part of a whole.

### **If someone is looking at your work, what feelings, thoughts or ideas do you want them to have?**

Most people are very interested in what I do. My work is different yet appealing. So far I have had very positive experience and most people are very supportive. I like hearing "How did you get that result?"

### **"Art is ..."**

Art is relaxing yet all consuming! Join a class and start your journey. Remember, if you are coming into your retirement years and you are interested in art you have a lot to look forward to!

*You can find Lilly Cleveland's work at the Russell Gallery in Plymouth. She also has a show coming up at the Wren Community Gallery in Bethlehem, N.H. in June. If you'd like to visit her studio, call 781-934-1519 or visit [www.lillicleveland.com](http://www.lillicleveland.com)*